

Congratulations, Keegan Thompson, 2015 Youth Tour recipient

Keeagan Thompson was chosen as the winner for the 2015 Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in June. To enter for the all-expense-paid trip from McKenzie Electric Cooperative, Keegan had to write a brief essay on how he would influence other students his age to become more actively involved in the electric cooperative – including attendance at the electric cooperative annual meeting. Keegan’s excellent essay on the importance of cooperative involvement earned him the free trip.

The trip will take place June 13-19, and will take the students through many of the amazing sites and national treasures that Washington, D.C., has to offer. From dinner at Mount Vernon, to exclusive tours of the memorials, to the Smithsonian Museum, a play at the Kennedy Center, and so much more, this is definitely going to be the trip of a lifetime and it’s all sponsored by your local electric cooperatives.

Keegan says he is looking forward to broadening his horizons and learning new things during his trip to Washington, D.C. He was inspired to enter the essay contest because, “McKenzie Electric is such a great company, and I want to show my appreciation for this (opportunity).”

Keegan is an active senior high school student at Watford City High School. During the school year, he is involved in FBLA, FFA, football, baseball and track.

Washington, D.C., isn’t the only trip that Keegan is looking forward to this summer. He will also be traveling to Europe for a school-sponsored trip, which will tour Rome,

Italy and Greece, and include a three-day cruise around the Greek Islands. What an amazing and memorable summer Keegan is about to have!

Keegan plans to attend the University of Mary in the fall of 2015, to obtain his pre-dental degree.

Here is Keegan’s essay:

If I was asked to tell my peers about and influence them into the ways of McKenzie Electric Cooperative, I would gladly do so by starting off telling them that there is no way around cooperatives, including McKenzie Electric. They are the way of the future. Buying direct and having no need to change their prices so frequently and drastically without informing their valued customers, is something that set them far apart from private corporations whose main focus is money.

The annual meeting is something that you need to experience. I know as a child, I looked forward to it year after year. They always have something for people of all ages to do. They would have the newest and coolest gizmos! They are always mind-boggling and hard to wrap your head around how people make these.

But most of all, they are inspiring. They empower young adults to do more in their community and push their limits. One of the most important things I think about the McKenzie Electric Cooperative is that they want you to save. They will teach you countless ways on how to cut your electric cost. This is one of the outstanding things about them, their unrelenting care and desire to be above the competition. ■

McKenzie Electric Cooperative

Congratulations



BOLZ

New hires

Kevin Bolz

Kevin Bolz started with McKenzie Electric Feb. 17 as an apprentice lineworker serving the Watford City area.

Kevin graduated from Newberry, Mich., before attending Alpena Community College in the lower peninsula of Michigan. He studied the utility tech program at Alpena, before heading to North Dakota for work. Kevin joins the MEC team, after working for Higher Power for the last two years.

When Kevin isn't fulfilling his lineworker duties at McKenzie Electric, he enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with family when he has the opportunity.

Welcome, Kevin!



CARNS

Angie Carns

McKenzie Electric hired Angie Carns to fill the open secretary position on Feb. 9. Angie will be responsible for assisting with invoicing, taking payments, answering phones and assisting members, among various other office responsibilities.

Angie joins the team after 20 years of banking experience and four years of real estate experience. Angie has lived in areas all across the United States, but claims Marshall, Minn., as home. She is married to McKenzie Electric's Special Project Manager John Carns. Angie met John while she was living in Missouri. Angie and John have three children, Colin, 20, currently attending the University of Nevada-Las Vegas; Hailey, 13, and Logan, 10.

In her spare time, Angie enjoys cooking and shopping.

Welcome to MEC, Angie!



BROWN

Wanda Brown

Wanda Brown joined McKenzie Electric Cooperative Feb. 9 as a secretary/receptionist. Wanda will be in charge of answering phones, making deposits and assisting members with bill pay and new connects, along with various other office duties.

Wanda was born and raised in Watford City, where she graduated from high school. She previously worked for the McKenzie County Farmer and Dakota West Credit Union, prior to joining the MEC team.

Wanda has four daughters: Chandra, who is a senior at Nebraska-Kerney; Madison, who is a sophomore at Williston State; Abby, who works at Wolf Pup Daycare; and Cambree, who is a fourth-grader. Wanda recently got engaged to Brent Lillibridge, also from Watford City.

When she isn't working, Wanda enjoys spending time with family and going for walks. "My girls are my life," she said.

Welcome to the MEC team, Wanda!



4/13/15

Thank a lineman

On National Lineman Appreciation Day, we thank our linemen for their hard work and commitment to safety.



Energy tips for electronics

Our homes are filled with an alphabet of electronics: DVD, PC, TV, Xbox. Americans own approximately 24 electronic products per household, according to the Consumer Electronics Association, so considerable energy goes toward powering those products.

McKenzie Electric Cooperative offers some suggestions to maximize the energy efficiency of your electronic devices:

Use power strips

No matter what types of electronics you use, those glowing lights at night prove that power is still being consumed, even while everyone is sleeping. And those TVs, game consoles, cable boxes, and other electronics all draw small amounts of power, even when not in use.

There is a convenient and low-cost solution. A power strip makes it easy to turn them all off with one click. Advanced models offer options like timers, remote control or the ability to set a “master device” to shut down everything else when it’s turned off.

Unplug

When a laptop or smartphone is fully charged, unplug it.

Turn off computers, game consoles and other devices when they are not in use. Powering down your computer completely every night uses 50 percent less energy than sleep mode.

Use power saving modes

A computer idling in “sleep” mode uses less than half the energy of an active computer. Using the power management settings on computers and monitors can cause significant savings.

Most of you already have your monitor set to enter a low-power sleep mode when the computer is not being used. However, many times the computer itself is not set to enter

this same low-power mode. Did you know you can activate these settings on the computer quickly and easily and double your savings?

Your computer, like your monitor, will enter a low-power mode automatically after a period of inactivity and “awaken” in seconds when you wiggle your mouse or touch your keyboard.

To learn how to set your computer to this mode, go to www.energystar.gov, click on “energy savings at home” and “I’d like to know about power management for my computer.”

Reduce your TV brightness

As TV screen sizes increase, energy consumption may also increase, but there are still ways to be a savvy shopper. An Energy Star-certified TV will be about 25 percent more energy-efficient than conventional models. LED screens use 20 percent less energy than an LCD TV.

Once you purchase a new TV, calibrate it by adjusting the contrast and brightness to a moderate level. By default, new televisions are set to dynamic, high-contrast settings which consume more power than standard, lower-contrast settings.

Look for the logo

Opt for TVs and other electronics that have earned the Energy Star designation.

Some office products can provide dramatic energy savings, as much as 75 percent. Overall, Energy Star-labeled office products use about half the electricity of standard equipment.

Energy Star-labeled computers use 30-65 percent less energy than computers without this designation, depending on usage.

Choose a laptop

Consider buying a laptop for your next computer upgrade; laptops use much less energy than desktop computers. ■

Jim and Joyce Tvetter join hands as they share their recent transplant experience.



Side by side

BY KATE RUGGLES

Jim Tvetter and his wife, Joyce, have been married for almost 50 years. They both attended the same college, Minot State University, where they met and married. They have the same initials, and they both grew up in families with seven children. They even share the same blood type, O negative – the universal donor.

These similarities have been a part of their story for as long as they have been together. But when Jim recently discovered that he needed

a life-saving kidney transplant, their similarities are what allowed their story to keep going.

According to Joyce, Jim's kidneys started failing a few years ago. In 2013, his longtime doctor and golf partner, Dr. Gary Ramage, referred him to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs clinic in Fargo for answers, as Jim is a U.S. Army veteran from the Vietnam war.

"When we met with the nephrologist there, my kidney

functions were at 33 percent," Jim stated. "It wasn't good, but it wasn't at a point where I had to panic either."

His poor health continued and he struggled with low energy, loss of strength and pain. So in early 2014, he went back for more testing.

The VA Clinic in Fargo diagnosed him with a hereditary condition called polycystic kidney disease and informed him that he was in stage 4. Additionally, in less than a year, his kidney function fell from 33 percent to 17. Anything below 20 made him an automatic candidate for dialysis or a transplant.

The news was not good, and with Jim having such low functioning kidneys, the Tvetters needed to weigh their options quickly.

"One option was for Jim to get dialysis three times a week for four

hours,” Joyce stated. “But Williston was the nearest location he could have gone to and at the time the highway was still under construction.”

A second option was for Jim to put his name on a nationwide organ transplant recipient list, but O negative is a rare blood type.

“I can give to anyone, but that does not mean that just anyone can give to me,” Jim said. “There is also a nationwide shortage and it could have potentially taken five years or more to find a matching donor.”

Their third option was to find a matching living donor – someone still alive who was willing to part with one of their kidneys.

“Living donors make for better long-term transplant successes,” Joyce said. “So it was a no-brainer.”

It was the option with the best chance for Jim’s long-term survival, making it the best option for the Tvetters.

Jim’s disorder, polycystic kidney disease, can show up in a person’s early 40s, so his children were not recommended as potential donors.

“They could have been tested, but the process was expensive and it would have been time-consuming, because they could only be tested one at a time,” Jim said.

There was really only one good, viable donor. And she had been sitting right there by his side, and had been by his side for the past 49 years.

“Without hesitation, I volunteered. It was something that I wanted to do for my husband,” Joyce said. “I considered it an opportunity to do something special for him and if the roles were reversed, I know that he would do the same for me.”

So, in May 2014, they got the ball rolling. The VA Clinic in Fargo was unable to perform the transplant surgery, and if Jim had opted to have the VA perform the surgery, he would have had to travel to Oregon, Tennessee or Pennsylvania.

The couple also explored options



Shortly after the surgery, there was no stopping Joyce as she made her way to Jim’s room to check on him.

in South Dakota, as their son is in the medical profession in the Rapid City area. However, a transplant surgery in South Dakota would have to be performed in Sioux Falls, which would have been five hours from their son, and 10 hours from Watford City.

The couple settled on Sanford Hospital in Bismarck – the only hospital in North Dakota that will perform a transplant surgery. They then sat down with the transplant team.

“They were so nice,” Joyce recalled. “They talked with us for hours, just explaining what was going to take place and answering our questions.”

Both Jim and Joyce had to be evaluated, Jim to receive a transplant and Joyce to make sure she was a viable, matching candidate.

There was several criteria that Joyce had to meet to become a possible donor, the two most important ones being blood type and tissue matching. It was not necessary for Joyce to meet each set of criteria, and she didn’t. But according to her, she met on what mattered.

“I went through more tests than I have ever gone through,” she said.

“We drove to Bismarck so many times through this process, that in hindsight we should have considered moving there.”

Through the entire testing process, the Tvetters were looking to July, hoping they could have the procedure done by then. But in June, Jim was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, or an irregular heartbeat.

“In 2002, I was in atrial fibrillation, and Dr. Ramage sent me to St. Cloud, Minn.,” Jim said. “They performed a procedure called an ablation, and it worked well. I had not had any problems with my heart until last June.”

In July, the transplant process ground to a halt, while Jim received a pacemaker. The pacemaker worked right away, but Jim had to wait another six to eight weeks before the transplant process could continue, which meant more waiting for the Tvetters. And more worrying.

“All this time, we were thinking about Jim’s low-functioning kidneys,” Joyce stated. “They were at 17 percent when he was seen in Fargo at the VA Clinic, but then when he was tested again in June, they dropped to 13

percent. We wondered if he would even make it to the transplant surgery. Or we wondered if he would have to start dialysis. We did not know.”

Finally, in October 2014, Jim and Joyce got their answer. They were both approved for the transplantation surgery and the date was set for Nov. 4, 2014.

Their surgeries took eight hours. The doctors who performed Jim’s surgery told Jim that his wife’s kidney took right away, and afterwards, Jim stayed in the hospital for six days, Joyce for three.

The surgery was a huge success. The fact that the kidney took right away is unusual, as it takes some time in most cases.

Also, Jim had a fairly rigorous post-operative appointment schedule. He was required to stay in Bismarck for three weeks following the surgery, but they were both able to come home for Thanksgiving.

“We were very blessed for this to happen,” Joyce shared. “So many conditions and factors had to be in place for this to happen, and it did. We were very fortunate.”

Then, Jim was required to be seen in Bismarck once a week for the month of December, but in January, that schedule was moved to once every two weeks. By February, his doctor allowed him to go to monthly visits and get his blood work done in Watford City.

It was a tough ordeal. Jim’s doctor urged him to stay away from crowds for a while, because his immune system was low after the surgery. So where he used to coach and always tried to catch the local high school basketball games, he only went to one this past season. Jim and Joyce are very friendly and visit often, they did not do that a lot this winter.

And, where Jim always makes time for golf, he was unable to golf.

In everything, though, there was a silver lining. Starting with Jim’s golf partner, Dr. Ramage, who



Dr. Ramage and the surgeon prepare for Jim’s surgery.

was allowed to participate in the procedure.

“It was so nice having Dr. Ramage there to assist and support us,” Joyce stated. “I don’t know exactly what he did during the surgery, but it was so comforting to have him there. He talked with us before the surgery, and it just put us both at ease.”

“All I know is that he talked to me until I went under, and he was the last friendly face I saw,” Jim said. “It was so nice of him to be there for me.”

Joyce said that there were so many other things that happened along the way, so many things that people did and so many people who prayed for them, that it was overwhelming and heart-warming.

Their three children, JeAnne, Jayme and Jayson, stood by their side, Jim’s sister and brother-in-law, Shelly and Clif Sundt, stood by their side, people sent them prayer shawls, and the transplant team was incredibly warm and supportive through the entire process.

Joyce states that their neighbor’s son was so touched by what they went through that he decided to become an organ donor when he got his driver’s license.

“It is the little things like that that just get you,” Joyce said. “And the list just goes on.”

They had a friend who had a condo in Bismarck that they were allowed to stay in to recover after the surgery, and Joyce says that, “even the people in the condo were supportive and friendly.”

One of the residents saw her walking every day and gave her a pair of handmade hand-warmers.

“It does not sound like a big deal, but it was,” Joyce said. “Everything that happened, all that people did, it just meant so much. We are so thankful for the prayers that went up and all the support we received. We could not have done this without that support.”

Through it all, Joyce says that they learned four very important things: be proactive, have a positive attitude, be patient and pray.

“I know it wouldn’t have happened without prayer,” Joyce said.

It is their hope that the transplant continues to improve Jim’s health and give him a brighter future. After all, as Joyce states, “he has a lot more golfing yet to do!” ■

Venturing out in a new area and meeting needs at the same time



It is somewhat funny how just as one need is met, other needs are created. For instance, just as the housing need in a booming western North Dakota started being met through the building of multi-family and single-family homes, people began needing a way to know what was out there for purchase or rent.

Jane Hadley began publishing the *Real Estate and Rental Guide* 14 months ago. Before that, finding a place to live was a lengthy process of incoming residents stopping in at various real estate business, apartment developments, local grocery stores, and essentially anywhere they could find a person to ask, “Do you know of any place that is available for rent?” But Hadley and the *Real Estate and Rental Guide* have been helping to make that process a little easier for newcomers.

When Hadley first published the magazine, it was with eight pages and 2,500 copies. Now, over a year later, and she has gone to more than 50 pages and 5,000 copies in distribution. With such a great turnout, it is amazing that she more or less fell into the business.

Hadley graduated from college with a bachelor’s of arts degree in fine arts and graphic design. She then worked for Century Publishing in Post Falls,

Idaho, where she managed roughly 10 staff members and published the company’s *Homeseeker’s Magazine*, along with custom books for real estate companies like Century 21.

However, in 2001, when Century Publishing was bought out, and the home contracts were discontinued, Hadley went back to school. She obtained her master’s degree in secondary education and taught art for 10 years at the local middle school.

“I loved it,” Hadley states. “Not only was it perfect because my kids were in school, but I took on yearbook and was able to coach and get involved with the National Honor Society and the Junior Honor Society. I was very involved in the community.”

Fast forward to 2013, when Hadley and her family relocated to McKenzie County so her husband, Walter, could become the head of the county’s new building and planning department. None of the local schools were looking for an art teacher, so Hadley got a job working for a local real estate company.

“People were constantly coming into our office needing information about where they would rent and what was available,” Hadley says.

After six months, she decided to go back to her roots and take a leap of faith. It is a step that has really paid off.

“I love it for so many reasons,” Hadley says. “Not only have I met so many people through this process, but it has forced me to learn the latest technology, and given me some great flexibility.”

This year, Hadley is splitting the cover of the *Real Estate and Rental Guide*, so that Watford City and Williston have their own cover. Hadley is also pushing her distribution list further out.

“My goal is to literally be the real estate connection for the western half of the state, and be as far north and as far south as possible,” Hadley states. Currently, the *Real Estate and Rental Guide* can be found in grocery stores, school district offices and doctors offices in Ray, Tioga, Sidney, Fairview, Beach, Medora, Richardton, Williston, Watford City and she is pushing into Dickinson.

This year, Hadley is venturing out in more ways than her publication’s distribution. She and partner, Lori Schneider, started J&L Publications, which will be overseeing the area Parade of Homes taking place in McKenzie County during Homefest weekend in June.

The Parade of Homes will showcase new, unoccupied single and multi-family homes in the area, as well as local builders and vendors. Hadley is hoping to have a good showing, as well as put on a fun, quality event that people will get into.

The application deadline for the Parade of Homes is May 15. Anyone looking for more information can contact Hadley, or Schneider, or check out the Watford City Parade of Homes website at watfordcityparadeofhomes.com.

Hadley has been incredibly humbled by the experiences she has had publishing the *Real Estate and Rental Guide*.

“If it wasn’t for people like my business partner, Lori, who owns IDesign and takes care of my clients in Williston, as well as good contacts like my photographer, Christina Bukowski, this really would not have been possible or as enjoyable,” Hadley states. “Everyone I’ve met through this process has just fallen into place and every step I’ve taken has just made sense.” ■

February 25, 2015



Monsen



Link



Hanna



Thompson



Wahlstrom



Johnson



Tescher



Houghton



Wasem

The regular meeting of the McKenzie Electric Board of Directors was held at the Headquarters Building in Watford City, North Dakota. Directors present were: Clayton Monsen, Dennis Johnson, Donald Link, Rondee Hanna, Ray Tescher, Glen Houghton, and Tim Wasem. Cooperative Manager/CEO John Skurupey, Attorney Dennis Johnson and staff personnel of McKenzie Electric were also present.

PRELIMINARIES: The agenda for the meeting and minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the Board of Directors. Director expenses were also approved.

DIRECTOR DISCUSSIONS: The Board reviewed the proposed revised Attorney Fees & Duties Policy as discussed at the previous meeting and approved the policy as presented. A special meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on March 11 to discuss the healthcare insurance trust that is being formed for North Dakota electric cooperative employees.

ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS: Donald Link reviewed the minutes of the recent North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) executive board meeting. Several statewide political issues were also discussed.

POWER SUPPLY: The Board reviewed the minutes of the recent Upper Missouri Power Cooperative board meeting. Ray Tescher reported on the Mid-West Electric strategic planning session he attended. The Board selected Travis Thompson as trustee and Ray Tescher as alternate trustee to the Upper Missouri Board of Directors. Ray Tescher was selected as chairman of the voting delegates and Dennis Johnson as alternate to the Upper Missouri annual meeting.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Attorney Dennis Johnson reported on several easement issues including easements for the current headquarters property.

GENERAL MANAGER/CEO REPORT: General Manager/CEO John Skurupey reported on his progress with developing an equity management policy to support budgeting, margins and rate making decisions. The headquarters building project access road was discussed; the Board approved a change order for the new headquarters building regarding alternative heating. The Board and management discussed the standard kVA transformer sizes MEC supplies at no cost to the member/consumer with consensus to continue with the 300kVA maximum. Skurupey discussed employee recruitment and housing issues.

OFFICE REPORT: Financial and statistical reports for January were reviewed with the Board along with a budget-to-date comparison. An update was given on the CP-1 rate class change to the 25kW threshold. The Board approved paying the City of Killdeer assessment in full (payable over 15 years) on the outpost property that was recently annexed.

ENGINEERING REPORT: A status report was provided regarding contractor pricing. An update was given on the restructuring changes in the Engineering department. The implementation of substation supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) is moving forward.

OPERATIONS/CONTRACT MANAGEMENT REPORT: An update was given on the projects currently being worked on by MEC personnel. The 115kV capacitors were energized at the Banks and Veeder substations. MEC also energized the North Fork transmission line and substation, Horse Creek substation and the 230kV to 115kV Timber Creek transformer.

NERC COMPLIANCE: An update was given on the continuing process to develop policies and programs for MEC to become NERC (North American Electric Reliability Corporation) compliant — including documentation of facilities registered under MEC's power supplier. The Timeline to Compliance is also a work in progress. An update was also

given on the status of substation land acquisition sites.

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT: The E-Bill signup campaign is underway with several members signing up for auto pay. The winner of the Youth Tour Essay Contest was Keegan Thompson. Annual meeting plans are underway; the annual meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2015.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting date was set for March 25, 2015 at the Watford City Headquarters building.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. ■



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